9/16/74

Dear Paul,

Sorry not to have been able to respond to your two letters earlier. I was off on a short trip.

Let me respond first to what interests you most, how long it would take to turn some rough material into a book. The answer is not as simple as it may seem. First, of course, it would depend on the subject and the completeness of the material. Then the objective. The current trend is for short books but some subjects do not lend themselves to that. I'd have to know more.

However, there is one I do not want you to think I've forgotten about. This also introduces another factor, is the writer one who is suitable for that book. You have one that will make a movie. We discussed this long ago and I've not foggotten it. I am not the kind of writer to do that book because when I finished it it would lack the touches that would give it the movie potential.

On the other hand, I've been getting approaches from Hollywood on one of my own books. The wealthier outfit is simply going ahead and stealing it but they've run into some internal problems. The less wealthy one is still putting a deal together because of inflation. They began with enough to see it through but that was less than enough before they could get under way.

You then have to consider who would publish it. With the hangups on the subjects that are closest to me I have little choice but to be my own publisher, but that is the worst of choices, one I've made only because there is no real alternative. You have just told me your experiences trying to arrange distribution for me in Dallas, where I think this book would sell well and where I think a community interest is well/ served by it.

If it is a controversail subject you have to worry about whether the publisher can be reached. The movie interest is in my least well-known work one that was killed by the publisher. I did not publish that one. When I know more I'll be able to tell you more. Do you expect to have to be up this way any time soon? It would be better if we could talk.

If it is a book for which I'm not the right writer and one that can have mass appeal, since I saw you last I have become good friends with a department head in the best of the paperback houses. If they see mass sale in a book, the best way today is to begin with a paperback contract, let them place the book with a hardback publisher, and then the author or authors do not lose the 50% that the hardback publisher takes when he places a book for reprint.

It is a crazy business and more crooked than you can imagine. It is also one of the most backward of all businesses. How crooked? Well, of all the major distributors I've used in the past, there is only one with whom I'll place this new book. All the others gypped me. With interest out of about $20,000, one of the reasons I'm broke. In reprint I got beat out of probably twice this amount. But the one who did not gyp me is a good businessman and honest. He is even advertising this book in his weekly mailing that becomes his catalogue. He remembers that he made good money on my earlier books, soke of his customers selling as many as 300 copies a day. The largest west-coast distributor sold out his entire supply in a single city in a single day and did the same thing twice more when he reordered, yet making this kind of money he gypped me. Just didn't pay. It is this kind of business.

John Murphy is right in saying he can't make money on privately-printed books if he restricts himself to a general statement. But the poorest-selling of mine has done about four times the avergae of all books. They have a good track record. I will not have money for advertising and public relations. He anticipates this correctly. However, if the local papers develop any interest, and if they are interested it ending that jazz about the so-called spirit of Dallas being responsible for the JFK assassination, they'll give this book the kind of attention that will make it a best-seller in Dallas. With less than that, were it possible to do a talk show or two by phone with Dallas stations, the book will sell well. If those who were not overly-fond of Earl Warren develop any interest, they'll push the book hard. It includes a facsimile of a top secret get-together of the Commission members in which, never expected there would be a devil loving scripture who would lay hands on it, they let their hair down. They actually planned how not to investigate, how to avoid really going into whether or not Oswald was an informant. In the course of this ~~xxx~~ there is one helluva expose of the CIA by Allen Dulles himself. In his own words. Top Secret stamps still on every page. And many other things. How they played around with reporters having no rights is ~~by~~ one of the other subjects.

What a book can do and what it will do are not necessarily one and the same thing. I know what this book can do. If I had a way of reaching just college bookstores, the sale to college students alone would be very good. But it has much wider appeal. I mean that there is subject matter the kids will be studying for years plus the general interest in which, because it is also a story of government corruption, they'll go for more.

It is because of the content that long ago I asked you if you know any of the Dallas leaders who would really want to do something about taking this federal curse off the city and would help get the book out. I can't increase my indebtedness, not at 61. When that didn't work and when I could not go around looking for help the young lawyer who handled the case for me through which I got this material borrowed the money to pay the printer and I've given him 30% of the book in return, plus the income as it comes in to repay what he borrowed. (He is a fine young man, and able. He is the one who deposed Percy Foreman. Before long Foreman claimed he couldn't remember his own name. To the avergae reader the transcript of this deposition will not be exciting, but I'll give you odds that Percy Foreman, with this record, will never show up for that trial. My friend did that good a job of getting him on the record in what will be perjury if he is a live witness before a live judge.)

The other problems Murphy mentioned are normal in his business. His customers do not pay or not pay because of the book. They pay or they don't pay because of the kind of people they are.

We can't discount 60% to a local distributor. In this case wex are giving more than 10% of the first and perhaps ~~xxxx~~ only printing to members of Congress. That plus the cost of getting it to them comes off the top. This, in fact, means we'll have to be very stingy with all freebees, including press and review copies. We are having to limit ourselves to six free copies each. This will not take care of our families. We'll actually be buying any copies over six we give away free. It is that tight. The reason we are giving members of Congress copies has nothing to do with the assassination. It is because of the documentation of federal corruption with the "Freedom of Information" law. And amendment, to restore it to its original meaning, is before Congress now. The first of three corrupted cases that the debates show ~~xxx~~ caused this amendment to be passed is one of mine. So, we're giving wholesalers 50% on orders of 100 or more, fully returnable.

We have dealt with Cokesbury before, but I think very little with Dallas, They are a large chain. My wife, who is still asleep, has written someone there. If Albright buys for their Dallas stores only, then the discount would be 40%. However, if

he buys for all their stores, everywhere, it would be 50% even if he didn't ask it. If you get to speak to him again or can find time, the book is 6x9, 60lb paper with a perfect binding. ("Perfect" is the anem and I hope the result. The book is in the bindery right now. I don't have a copy yet.)

On public relations: a TV net is considering whether to buy the rights to a special on it. While the odds are against this kind of thing, and this is a real tough book, they are interested. The real question is do they have the balls. I may get an answer this week. On the lower level it was liked and passed upward. They are considering based on a xerox before the book went to the printer.

Do you know or can you learn for me the name of the Houston wholesaler? I'll be doing at least one broadcast to Houston by phone, the show of a fellow who has often aired me this way. In fact, we've never met and I'll bet I've done his show a dozen times. His audience digs me.

I'll write Maggie Harris - I just don't have the money for phoning - if I've heard nothing from or about Murphy by the time I have copies of the book. Thanks for all the trouble.

Because I regarded it as necessary to his protection, as soon as I had enough done to show him I spoke to a mutual friend to get word to Lonnie that he should see this before it is out. Took him a month to call me back but he and his wife and junior spent a Sunday here. Before he got here we took out all the pages the content of which he should know so he could be prepared. I took the liberty of making some public relations suggestions to him, what his reaction should be if any flack goes his way. He agrees and he is ready. Behind his back those bigshots were not kind to him and the feds, as you know, had their own interests to serve. He had never seen the reports the Bureau and the Secret Service filed. I have more. When he comes again we'll make copies of all of them for him. Those on Goulden and Mrs. Paine, who was a real fink, as Lonnie suspected. He has seen some of these. When he comes again and doesn't have to look out for his immediate interest, I'll get them all for him and let him copy what he wants.

By the way, he said to ask you to send me a copy of one thing in particular, a piece of paper about the size of a ciagrette paper he gave you to keep for him, with some numbers on it. He is not sure if there was also a telegram from a Chicago lawyer. He said if there is I can have it or anything else. I am - but not for immediate use - interested in these two things. In time others. I am doing a separate book about which I spoke to you when we were drinking at the Texas club. It is for that book that I sued to get what has made this book a separate book. I had five or six chapters written when we discussed this but laid it aside for other work.

I'm really sorry that none of the Dallas moneyed people have a genuine interest in lifting this federal stigma off the city. I have a very large book ready for printing that can do it once and for all but no publisher will touch it and I can't swing it alone. In fact, I have so much documentation for this book that the only remaining problem is what to leave out of the appendix. You've never seen such documentation. I'm talking about what the Commission didn't have.

Wish I thought I could be there soon! Thanks and best regards,